

Amazing Northern Vietnam Hanoi – Mai Chau – Pu Luong – Ha Long (8D7N)

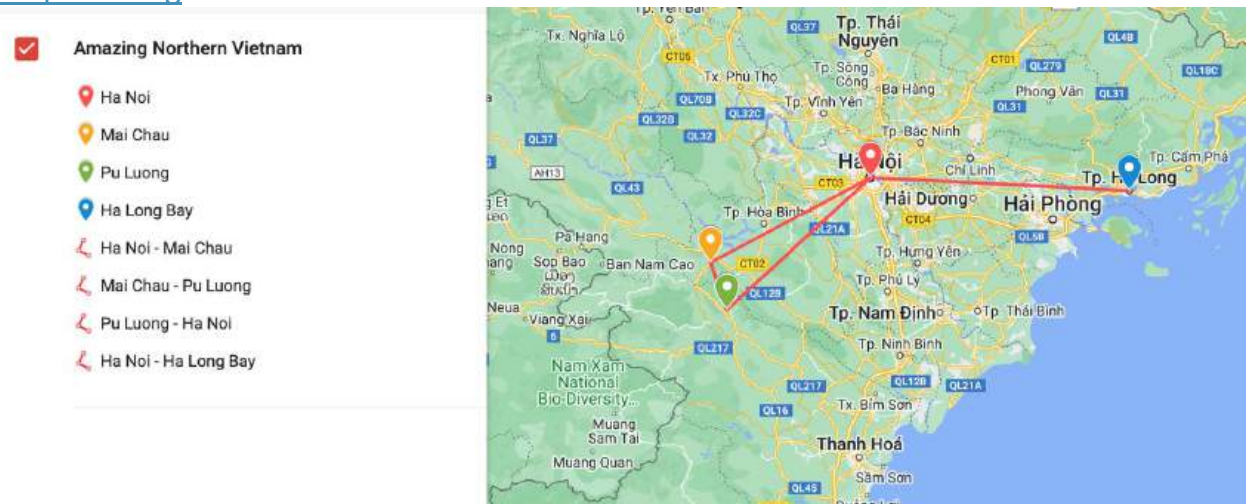


Trip information:

- **Guest's name:** []
- **Nationality:** []
- **Travel Period:** []
- **Number of group:** []
- **Trip highlights:** Unveil the charms of Northern Vietnam through various thrilling experiences:
 - Explore Vietnam's vibrant capital, visiting historic landmarks and enjoying authentic street food in the bustling Old Quarter
 - Cycle through the serene Mai Chau Valley, taking in the stunning rice terraces and experiencing the local culture.
 - Discover the natural beauty of Pu Luong, with its ethnic villages, bamboo forests, and mesmerizing waterfalls.
 - Cruise through the emerald waters of Ha Long and Lan Ha Bay, exploring hidden caves and enjoying breathtaking sunsets on the deck.
- **Duration:** 08 days
- **Travel styles:** Classic, Family, Beach, Active & Nature
- **Start:** Ha Noi - **Finish:** Ha Noi
- **Physical:** Moderate
- **Code:** NOR24_08G01
- **Ages:** all ages

- **Group size:** 2-14 (Please contact us for more support if you are a solo traveler or your group has more than 14 people).
- **Map link:**

<https://www.google.com/maps/d/u/0/edit?mid=110UC7UTOCXrCoD8YxHftdDGU4nHT1I&usp=sharing>



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- **Price:**

Price USD/person	Group 2-3 pax	Group 4-5 pax	Group 6-7 pax	Group 8-9 pax	Group 10-11 pax	Group 12-14 pax
4-star	USD 1040/ person	USD 875/ person	USD 793/ person	USD 789/ person	USD 760/ person	USD 738/ person
5-star	USD 1192/ person	USD 1029/ person	USD 947/ person	USD 943/ person	USD 914/ person	USD 892/ person
Exclude holiday surcharges from 10% to 20%.						
	4-star accommodation			5-star accommodation		
Ha Noi	La Mejor Hanoi or similar: https://lamejorhotel.com/room/deluxe-room/ (deluxe room)			Oriental Jade or similar https://theorientaljadehotel.com/accommodation/oriental-emerald-room (oriental emerald room)		
Mai Chau	Mai Chau Ecolodge 4* or similar https://maichau.ecolodge.asia/en/index.html (Superior room)					
Pu Luong	Pu Luong Natura Bungalow 4* or similar https://naturabungalow.com/ (Deluxe Garden-Pool View)					
Ha Long	Peony Cruise or similar: https://www.peonycruises.com/ (Deluxe balcony)			Mon Cheri Cruise or similar: https://www.monchericruises.com (Ocean Suite Balcony)		

- **Trip Outline: (B: Breakfast; L: Lunch; D: Dinner; ESG: English-speaking local guide)**

Day	Activities	Accommodations	Meals
Day 1	Ha Noi – Ha Noi half day city tour – Ha Noi streetfood (ESG)	Ha Noi	L/D
Day 2	Ha Noi – Mai Chau, Thung Khe Pass, cycling (ESG)	Mai Chau	B/L/D
Day 3	Mai Chau – Pu Luong, ethnic villages, Chieu Cave (ESG)	Pu Luong	B/L/D
Day 4	Pu Luong, Be Tre Suoi Cham_bamboo rafting, Hieu Waterfall, walking down to visit Ban Don, Ban Leo (ESG)	Pu Luong	B/L/D
Day 5	Pu Luong – Ha Noi, railway street (ESG)	Ha Noi	B/L/D
Day 6	Ha Noi – Ho Chi Minh’s Mausoleum – Presidential Palace – One Pillar pagoda – Tran Quoc pagoda – Duong Lam ancient village – Vietnamese water puppet show (ESG)	Ha Noi	B/L/D
Day 7	Hanoi – Ha Long – Lan Ha Bay (sharing limousine bus + sharing English speaking guide)	Ha Long	B/L/D
Day 8	Lan Ha Bay – Ha Long Bay – Ha Noi – Departure (sharing limousine bus + sharing English speaking guide)		B/L/D

Itinerary:

DAY 1: Arrival Hanoi – Hanoi half day city tour (ESG/L/D)

- Arriving in Hanoi, depending on your arrival time, our **English speaking local guide (ESG)** and driver will welcome you at the airport, then transfer you for **lunch**.
- **14:00:** Check in at your hotel.
- Have a short rest, then take your first look at Hanoi Capital by visiting its most famous monuments, such as **the Temple of Literature**, known as the first university in Vietnam.



- Explore **the Lake of the Restored Sword, Ngoc Son Temple, and The Huc Bridge**—an iconic symbol of Hanoi that has accompanied the historical development of Vietnam and is deeply associated with the spiritual life of the Vietnamese people. Additionally, travelers can take a one-hour cyclo tour around the **Old Quarter**, a bustling area that has been submitted to UNESCO for recognition as a World Cultural Heritage site.
- In the evening, enjoy **authentic Hanoi Street food**: Bun Cha (Grilled pork noodle); Banh Cuon (Vietnamese rice roll noodle), Trang Tien sweet soup and ice cream, draft beer.
- **21:00:** Return to your hotel for leisure time and overnight in Hanoi.



DAY 2: Ha Noi - Mai Chau (ESG/B/L/D)

- **08:00:** Pick up guests in Hanoi in our comfortable car.
- **10:00:** Brief stop in Luong Son and at a beautiful spot in Mai Chau valley called **Thung Khe Pass**, where you can take stunning photos.



- **11:30 - 12:00:** Arrival in Mai Chau.
- **12:15:** Have lunch at a local restaurant. Then, check in at the hotel and take a short rest.
- **14:30 - 17:00:** Enjoy cycling with our guide, observing farmers at work, local people weaving scarves, and visiting peaceful surrounding villages. Take photos near the terraced fields of ripe golden rice.
- **17:00 - 19:00:** Free time for walking, shopping and enjoying dinner at a local restaurant.
- **Evening:** Return to the hotel and overnight in Mai Chau.



DAY 3: Mai Chau - Pu Luong (ESG/B/L/D)

- **07:30:** Have breakfast at the hotel.
- **08:00:** Visit traditional villages to explore the lives and customs of the **ethnic people: Na Meo, Na Mo, and Xam Pa villages** to gain a deeper understanding their culture and traditions.



- **12:00:** Return to the hotel for check-out and have lunch.
- **13:00 - 16:00:** Explore **Chieu Cave**, a stunning underground marvel adorned with beautiful formations, offering a mesmerizing experience of natural beauty.
- **16:30:** Transfer to the hotel in Pu Luong.
- **18:00:** Check-in and relax at the hotel.
- **19:00 – 20:00:** Enjoy dinner at the hotel. Overnight in Pu Luong.

DAY 4: Pu Luong – Be Tre Suoi Cham – Hieu Water Fall (ESG/B/L/D)

- **08:00:** After breakfast, move to explore Pu Luong's landscapes, stopping by: **Be Tre Suoi Cham**, a peaceful bamboo stream, offering a serene escape amidst lush surroundings. If the weather permits, the group can experience bamboo rafting along the stream.





Next is **Hiêu Waterfall**, time for strolling, photography, and swimming.



11:30 – 13:00: Have lunch at the local restaurant.

13:00: Return to the hotel for a short rest.

15:00: Walk down to the valley floor (2-3km) to visit **Ban Don, Ban Leo**, admire terraced fields, stilt houses, and interact with the local Thai people here.

17:00: Return to the hotel, relax, and prepare for the evening.

18:00 – 20:00: Enjoy dinner. Overnight stay at the hotel.

DAY 5: Pu Luong – Ha Noi

(ESG/B/L/D)

08:00: After breakfast, all members of the group are free to relax, take photos at the check-in areas of the hotel/resort.

11:00: Check-out, have lunch.

12:30: The tour guide and the group return to Hanoi.

16:30-17:30: Arrive in Hanoi, check in the hotel.

18:00: Move to visit **railway street** - a famous destination in the capital. The train travels by the backyards of these families a couple times each day. Enjoy a cup of coffee and have dinner while waiting for the train to pass through.



20:00: Back to the hotel and overnight in Hanoi.

DAY 6: Hanoi sightseeing

(ESG/B/L/D)

- **08.00a.m:** After breakfast in the hotel, we have morning time for Ha Noi sightseeing: **Ho Chi Minh's mausoleum** (closed on Mondays & Fridays), **Presidential Palace**, **One Pillar pagoda**, **Tran Quoc Pagoda**.



- Have lunch at the local restaurant.
- In the afternoon: Transfer to **Duong Lam ancient village**, approximately 50km away from Hanoi. Arrive at Duong Lam, visit village gate, Mong Phu communal house, some ancient houses and enjoy local products: rice wine and cake. Go around the village to visit some cultural and historical vestiges in Duong Lam such as: Giang Van Minh worship-house, Princess Mia Palace and Temple, Mia pagoda.



- **17:30:** Arrive back in Ha Noi, have dinner, and enjoy a very famous traditional show- **Vietnamese water puppet show.**



- Back to the hotel and overnight in Ha Noi.

DAY 7: Ha Noi - Ha Long - Lan Ha Bay

(B/L/D)

- **09:00 – 09:30:** After breakfast in Ha Noi hotel, check out the hotel and sharing limousine bus (**only driver**) will pick you up.
- **12:00:** The crew members of **Peony or Mon Cheri Cruise** will welcome you at Tuan Chau Port, lot 16, Quang Ninh.

- **12:45:** You will be taken aboard our support vessel and travel from the wharf via the bay to board our luxurious craft, Peony or Mon Chéri Cruises. Welcome fresh drinks, cold towels and a special lunch of fresh food and an assortment of appetizing delicacies will be served. You will be enchanted when indulge our luxury junk. Life just doesn't get better than this! We then set sail for **Lan Ha Bay** - A member of the World's Most Beautiful Bays.
- **15:30:** We will visit **the Dark and Bright cave** - famous for the pristine natural beauty and poetic, attractive seascape of Lan Ha Bay. Here you will take some photos of the romantic, lyrical local see-sights. This is also the best time for tourists to enjoy bamboo boats or swimming. Discover the true beauty of the limestone mountains and the blue sky of Lan Ha Bay. Afterwards, visitors immerse in the emerald green water of Lan Ha Bay with exciting swimming activities or enjoy a mini pool with a jacuzzi on Peony or Mon Chéri Cruise.



- **06:30-7:30:** Breakfast is served at Mon Chéri Cruise restaurant.

- **08:00:** You will visit Frog Pond; go kayaking or be free to relax in the four-season mini pool on Lan Ha Bay - A silk ribbon made from green mountains, blue seas and diverse fauna and flora.
- **09:30:** Checking out of the room. Then the lunch in the restaurant is ready for you, pay the extra fee (if any) at the reception while traveling to the port. Kindly needed to pay for the costs in charge of the front desk (if any) while traveling to the port.
- **10:30 - 10:45:** Disembark and move back to the port.
- **12:00:** Back to Hanoi by sharing a limousine.
- **17:00:** Have dinner at the local restaurant and then move to the airport for the night flight **(after 19:00)** to your next destination, end of services.

THANK YOU FOR JOINING US & HAVE A NICE TRIP!

Inclusion:

- ❖ Good air-conditioned private 7-seat car (for 2-3 pax)/ 16-seat minivan (for 4-8 pax)/ 29-seat coach (for 9-14) as per the above itinerary.
- ❖ Water in the car: 02 bottles 500ml/person /visiting day.
- ❖ English-speaking local guides (06 days) as mentioned in the above itinerary.
- ❖ Accommodation (R.O.H) including breakfast.
- ❖ All entrance fees for sightseeings: Temple of Literature, Ngoc Son Temple, Ho Chi Minh Mausoleum, Presidential Palace, One Pillar pagoda, Duong Lam Village, Mai Chau valley, Chieu Cave, Hieu Waterfall.
- ❖ 01-hour cyclo tour in Ha Noi old town.
- ❖ Bicycle in Mai Chau.
- ❖ Boat ticket in Be Tre Suoi Cham
- ❖ Coffee in Hanoi railway streets.
- ❖ Vietnamese water puppet show (middle-class ticket).
- ❖ Halong cruise package 2D1N including 02 lunches, 01 dinner and 01 breakfast with entrance tickets + **sharing tour guide+ transfer by sharing-limousine-bus Ha Noi - Ha Long - Ha Noi.**

- ❖ Meals as mentioned in the itinerary (B: Breakfast; L: Lunch; D: Dinner): **06 lunches on days 1,2,3,4,5,6 (USD 8/pax/lunch) + 07 dinners on days 1,2,3,4,5,6,8 (USD 1/pax/dinner)**

Exclusion:

- Bank transfer fees
- Early check-in and late check-out at hotels
- Surcharge for peak seasons and mandatory dinners at hotels (if applicable)
- Travel insurance
- Vietnam visa (passport must be valid for over 6 months with 3 blank pages)
- Personal expenses
- Meals not mentioned in the itinerary, and beverages during meals
- Airfare (if applicable)
- Tips for guides and drivers (suggested amount: \$3-5 per person per day). Tipping is optional and should reflect the quality of service received.

Children Policy:

- The rate for children applicable for one child sharing a twin or double cabin with two adults.
- For infants (<04 years old): FOC except domestic ticket cost.
- 04 - 11 years old without bed: 50% adult rate.
- 04 - 11 years old with extra bed: 75% adult rate.
- 04 - 11 years old in twin share: 90% adult rate.

Payment & Deposit Terms:

To ensure that all parties meet their respective obligations, we outline our standard payment terms below:

Deposit: A confirmation and invoice will be sent to the customer within 24 hours of receiving the booking. A deposit of 50% of the total tour cost, or full payment, is required, depending on the specific tour arrangements and terms outlined in the invoice. Payment can be made through any of our online payment methods.

Final Payment: The deadline for the remaining balance will depend on the services booked and will be communicated by our travel consultant and via the invoice during the booking process.

Cancellations & Refund Policy:

Each local supplier and partner has its own specific cancellation terms, which will determine the applicable cancellation fees. Detailed information about these policies can be found on the individual service pages, particularly under the Rate & Availability section. If a customer decides to discontinue the tour midway, no refunds or exchanges will be

issued. Additionally, no compensation will be provided for any services that remain unused during the tour.

Tours (from 4 days above)

- More than 90 days before arrival date: FREE of charge.
- From 60 to 89 days before arrival date: 20% of total rate.
- From 30 to 59 days before arrival date: 30% of total rate.
- From 15 to 29 days before arrival date: 50% of total rate.
- From 7 to 14 days before arrival date: 70% of total rate.
- Less than 7 days before arrival date or No show: 100% of the total rate.

Short Tours (1 - 3 days)

- More than 7 days prior: 50% of total rates.
- From 4 to 7 days prior: 70% of total rates.
- Less than 3 days prior or no show: 100% of total rates.

Important notes:

Immigration process:

For visa-on-arrival: Present a valid passport and an entry letter (if any) to the customs officer for visa stamping.

For e-visa holders: Present your valid passport and e-visa (or a printed copy) at the immigration checkpoint. No stamp is required.

Weather:

- **Best time to visit:** The best time to visit Northern Vietnam is from October to April. During this period, the weather is cooler, especially from November to February when it can get quite chilly, particularly in mountainous areas like Mai Chau and Pu Luong. March and April offer pleasant weather with blooming flowers and mild temperatures, making it ideal for outdoor activities. From May to September, Northern Vietnam experiences hot and humid weather with frequent rainfall, especially in June and July, when heavy rains and occasional storms can occur. However, this period is also lush and green, with fewer tourists.
- **Pack Accordingly:** Bring lightweight clothing for warmer months, and pack a jacket or sweater for cooler months. Don't forget rain gear if traveling during the rainy season. Sturdy shoes are recommended for hiking in Pu Luong and Mai Chau.

Note when checking in for domestic flights in Vietnam:

- When checking in, please bring: Passport (valid for more than 06 months). For expatriates and foreigners entering with a separate visa, please bring your passport, visa, and customs declaration when traveling
- You should be at the airport 90 minutes before departure time and carry light luggage, not too bulky.

- Please bear the incurred costs and responsibility if you have a request to change the itinerary, flight date and time, or if there is incorrect information according to the regulations of the airlines.
- Do not leave sharp objects, knives, scissors, etc. or liquids in your hand luggage. All power banks should be placed in hand luggage.
- Self-consciously preserve your luggage during the trip (at hotels and attractions). Keep all important documents related to immigration procedures, such as airline tickets, passports, cash, and valuable personal items, in the safety box provided at your hotel. Avoid leaving them in your room or locking them in your suitcase in case of theft. Consider taking photos of all identification and important information to save on your phone for easy access if needed.
- Vietnam Lovely Travel will not be responsible if the carrier and aviation security refuse to transport due to error in the above information.
- Some order and details in the program may change to suit the objective situation (weather, traffic ...).
- You should bring special medicine (according to a doctor's prescription) if you are being treated for a chronic illness.

Do I need to purchase travel insurance before traveling in Vietnam?

Absolutely. All passengers traveling with Vietnam Lovely Travel are required to purchase travel insurance before the start of their trip. Your travel insurance details will be recorded by your tour guide on the first day of the trip. Due to the varying nature, availability and cost of health care around the world, travel insurance is very much an essential and necessary part of every journey.

Money matters:

When it comes to spending money on the trip, every traveler is a little different. You know your spending habits better than we do, so please budget an appropriate amount for optional meals, drinks, shopping, optional activities, and laundry. Make sure you have read the itinerary and inclusions thoroughly so you know what is included in the trip price and what you may need to pay for while traveling.

- Vietnamese Dong (VND) is the currency of Vietnam
- ATMs: Check if your card is compatible with local ATMs before traveling to Vietnam. Using an ATM card will help ensure safety during your travel. Yet, you should also bring a little cash to pay for services, shopping activities, dining demands,... when needed.
- Scam alert: Be careful of street vendors and local markets using similar colors of 500,000 VND and 20,000 VND bills to scam visitors.
- Counterfeit money: There are some counterfeit banknotes in circulation in Vietnam, particularly for the 500,000 VND, the biggest Vietnam currency note, so you should only exchange money at reputable places or ask for your tour guide experiences.

- Keep small bills on hand: Many vendors and small businesses may not have change for larger denominations, so it's helpful to keep smaller bills on hand.
- Notify your bank: If you plan to use your credit or debit card in Vietnam, notify your bank beforehand to avoid any issues with your account being flagged for suspicious activity.
- USD to VND current exchange rate: 1 USD ~ 24,000 - 25,000 VND (change cash in jewelry shop, the exchange rates are often better than in a bank or at the airport)
- QR code transfer: accepted in Vietnam
- Are credit cards accepted widely in Vietnam?

USD and Major credit cards are widely accepted by large shops, hotels and restaurants in Vietnam. However, they may not be accepted by smaller vendors such as small family restaurants, market stalls or in remote towns and rural areas. Make sure you carry enough cash for purchases, since credit cards aren't always an option everywhere in Vietnam.

Dining: Please inform the tour operator or tour guide in advance if you have any dietary requirements and/or food allergies.

Phone and internet access:

- With the modern world you may want to bring along tablets or smartphones for the children to document their adventure - there are a wide variety of apps out there which we suggest downloading before you depart. There will be opportunities to charge (just make sure you bring the correct adapter) and there will be wi-fi available on your trip, although it will probably not be at the speeds you are used to at home and it won't be available everywhere.
- E-sim can be a good option for you (less than 10 USD/sim card)

Electricity and adapter: 220V - 50Hz. If you are using different ones, our local guide can help you buy an adapter for not more than 1 USD.

Accommodation:

- Check-in from about 14.00 to 15.00 (can be later in the weekend day, peak season or at 5-star accommodation) and check-out before from about 11.00 to 12.00.
- Early check-in & late check-out will be confirmed according to room availability at that time and the hotel charges.
- Amenities: toothbrush, towel, hair comb, iron, etc., are available in all hotels.

Laundry: You may get better rates outside the hotels, but be careful with expensive clothes, as outside services can sometimes harm the quality of your clothes.

Shopping:

At local markets, you can bargain for **10-30% off** when buying local goods.

Safety:

For safety, keep your pocket/purse in front of you in crowded places.

Time schedule:

- Normal office working time or opening time in Vietnam: 8am-5pm (Mon to Fri); Sat: most offices close
- Shops/restaurants/theaters are mostly opening: 8am-10pm everyday. In Sapa, the closing time at some shops/restaurants may be earlier, around 9 p.m.

Is tipping compulsory in Vietnam?

Tipping isn't mandatory or customary in Vietnam, but a small tip is appreciated by restaurant staff, drivers, and other service workers, especially if the service was particularly good.

Destinations:

Ha Noi:

Hanoi is Vietnam's capital, lies on the banks of the Red River. It is cosy with tree-lines, boulevards, lakes, parks, French colonial buildings, elegant squares. As the capital of Vietnam for almost a thousand years, Hanoi is considered to be the cultural centre of Vietnam, where every dynasty has left behind their imprint. Even though some relics have not survived through wars and time, the city still has many interesting cultural and historic monuments for visitors and residents alike.

Attractions:

- **Hoan Kiem Lake:** A must-visit destination for tourists, offering serene views, historical significance, and a perfect spot for leisurely strolls amidst the city's vibrant atmosphere.
- **Ho Chi Minh Mausoleum:** A monumental structure built to house the embalmed body of Vietnam's greatest political leader, Ho Chi Minh.
- **One Pillar Pagoda:** A Buddhist wooden pagoda located in the middle of a lotus pond on a single stone pillar, built by Emperor Ly Thai To in 1049.
- **The Old Quarter:** Hanoi's historic Old Quarter comprises 36 streets, each historically home to artisans and craftsmen who specialized in the merchandise for which their street was named.
- **Ngoc Son Temple:** A historic temple on an island in Hoan Kiem Lake, dedicated to the scholar Van Xuong, military leader Tran Hung Dao, and the deity Quan Thanh.
- **Temple of Literature:** Vietnam's first university, founded in 1070, renowned for its beautiful traditional architecture and tranquil gardens.
- **Saint Joseph's Cathedral:** A stunning example of neo-Gothic architecture in Hanoi, built in the early 20th century, known for its impressive facade and ornate interior.
- **Hanoi Opera House:** This beautiful colonial building is the largest theater in Vietnam, it attracts renowned performers, productions and musicians nowadays.

- **Vietnamese Women's Museum:** The modern museum house a series of excellent exhibitions presenting artefacts, costumes, crafts, memoirs and photographs from the past 100 years.

Festivals & Holidays: Hanoi hosts various festivals throughout the year, including Christmas, New Year, and Lunar New Year, all celebrated with vibrant events and cultural performances.

Accommodation: Hanoi offers a variety of accommodation options, from budget hostels to luxury hotels. Booking in advance is recommended, especially during peak tourist seasons. Choose from charming hotels in the Old Quarter for a vibrant city experience or luxurious stays by West Lake for a more tranquil atmosphere

Clothing:

- **Summer:** Pack light and breathable clothing such as t-shirts, shorts, and sundresses. Don't forget sun protection like hats, sunglasses, and sunscreen to handle the heat and humidity.
- **Winter/Rainy Season:** Pack warm clothing such as thick jackets, sweaters, and long-sleeve shirts to stay comfortable in the cold temperatures. Bring rain gear, including a waterproof jacket and umbrella, as well as waterproof shoes for the rainy days.

Transportation:

- **Taxis & Ride-Hailing Services:** Convenient options for getting around the city, including ride-hailing apps like Grab.
- **Bicycles & Motorbikes:** Renting bicycles or motorbikes is a popular way to explore Da Nang and its surroundings.
- **Public Buses:** A budget-friendly option for getting around, though not always frequent.
- **Car Rentals:** Renting a car provides the flexibility to explore the city and nearby attractions at your own pace.
- **Electric cars:** you can rent electric cars from various locations, including hotels and rental shops. They are primarily used on certain roads, along the coastal line and for nearby attractions.

Local Drinks:

- **Vietnamese Coffee:** Particularly Vietnamese iced coffee (cà phê sữa đá) is very popular, with Egg Coffee being a notable specialty in Hanoi.
- **Bia Hơi:** A type of fresh beer widely enjoyed in Vietnam, often served in local eateries.
- **Hanoi Bold, Hanoi Light, Hanoi Premium:** Popular beers from Hanoi, commonly found in the city.

Local Food:

- **Miến:** Made from mung beans or sweet potatoes, miến (vermicelli) has a delicious chewy texture and a mild umami taste.
- **Pho:** A famous Vietnamese noodle soup consisting of broth, rice noodles, herbs, and usually meat.
- **Nom Bo Kho:** Beef jerky salad.
- **Bun Dau Mam Tom:** Fried tofu and fresh rice noodles served with fermented shrimp paste.
- **Mi Van Thang:** Noodles with dumplings.
- **Cha Ca:** Fatty catfish marinated in spices and grilled, then stirred with spring onions and dill right at the table.
- **Bun Cha:** Rice noodles combined with chargrilled pork belly and patties, served with diluted vinegar fish sauce.
- **Bun Thang:** Noodles with slices of Vietnamese ham, shredded chicken, omelette strips, and a clear umami broth.

Daily Life Activities:

- **Go Café-Hopping in Hanoi:** Explore Hanoi's vibrant café scene, where many establishments offer unique atmospheres and charming views, whether it's overlooking Hoan Kiem Lake, the bustling streets, or historic buildings. Savor a cup of Vietnamese coffee while soaking in the local ambiance.
- **Savor Local Food:** Hanoi provides a rich culinary experience with an array of traditional dishes, showcasing the diverse flavors of Northern Vietnam.
- **Stroll Around Hoan Kiem Lake:** Take a leisurely walk around Hoan Kiem Lake, enjoying the scenic beauty and the lively atmosphere of the surrounding area. The lake is a perfect spot for relaxation and people-watching.
- **Massage & Spas:** Unwind with a traditional Vietnamese massage or a spa treatment in one of Hanoi's many wellness centers. These services offer a great way to relax and rejuvenate after a day of exploring the city.
- **Night Markets:** Visit Hanoi's bustling night markets for a variety of street food, local goods, and vibrant street performances. The markets are ideal for experiencing local culture and finding unique souvenirs.
- **Bar & Nightlife:** Experience Hanoi's nightlife in its diverse bars and clubs, especially around the Old Quarter and Tây Hồ, like Ta Hien street. Enjoy live music, cocktails, and a lively atmosphere.
- **Cultural Performances:** Enjoy cultural performances in Hanoi, such as traditional water puppetry at the Thang Long Water Puppet Theater and classical music concerts, offering insight into Vietnam's rich heritage through art and storytelling.
- **Shopping:** Explore Hanoi's local markets and shopping areas for a range of handmade goods, clothing, and accessories. From the bustling streets of the Old Quarter to modern shopping centers, there are plenty of opportunities to find unique items.

- **Biking:** Rent a bike to explore Hanoi at your own pace. Cycle through the historic Old Quarter, along scenic lakes, or explore the outskirts for a different perspective of the city.
- **Motorbiking:** Discover Hanoi's attractions on a motorbike, giving you the freedom to navigate through busy streets, explore hidden corners, and venture into the countryside for a more adventurous experience.

Sports & Water Sports (Weather Permitting):

- **Golf:** Hanoi is home to several top golf courses, including the Hanoi Golf Club and Sky Lake Resort, offering stunning views and challenging play.
- **Cycling:** Explore Hanoi's scenic routes and historic sites by bike, including the picturesque West Lake area and the Old Quarter.
- **Boating:** Enjoy a relaxing boat ride on West Lake or take a day trip to the nearby Red River.
- **Kayaking:** Paddle through serene waters at West Lake or venture into the lush countryside.
- **Hiking:** Discover hiking trails in the nearby Ba Vi National Park or around the outskirts of Hanoi for a mix of nature and exercise.

Art Performances & Entertainment Shows:

- Thang Long Water Puppet Theater
- Hanoi Opera House
- Hanoi Old Quarter Cultural Shows

Art exhibitions and museums:

- Vietnam Museum of Fine Arts
- Ho Chi Minh Museum
- Vietnamese Women's Museum
- Hanoi Museum.

Mai Chau:

Nestled in a serene rural valley, **Mai Chau** is a tranquil haven just three hours from Hanoi. Surrounded by towering cliffs and lush, rolling rice paddies, the landscape is as peaceful as the soft clucking of chickens and the gentle rustling of leaves. Traditional stilt houses dot the area, framed by forest-covered mountains, while fresh, simple meals showcase the region's culinary charm. With its unique cultural heritage and laid-back atmosphere, Mai Chau offers an idyllic escape for those seeking a nature-rich retreat filled with local authenticity.

Attractions:

- **Lac and Pom Coong Village:** two villages with some 170 households, are at the very heart of the area. With stilt houses and lush, green rice fields, **Ban Lac, Pom Coong** and other villages dotted in the valley are quaint and serene, ethnic Thai

villages with very hospitable inhabitants. During the day you see the local population working on the land and moving cattle. In the evening, you are invited to relax and enjoy traditional alcoholic beverages and participate in traditional songs and dances of Thai ethnicity.

- **Go Lao Waterfall:** One of the most beautiful sights in Mai Chau is the Go Lao waterfall. About 20 meters high and located in a beautiful setting.
- **Thung Khe Pass:** Thung Khe Pass, also called White Rock Pass, is at a height of some 700 meters in altitude, making it a good stop-over to enjoy a gorgeous typical view of karst formation settings from high above (weather permitting) and taste some local foods by the Muong. High and meandering, this pass occasionally brings those who are from lowland areas a new feel – into an ocean of mist.
- **Mo Luong Cave:** Within walking distance from Mai Chau town, right to the left side of road 15 toward Lac and PomCoong villages, Mo Luong Cave is special, for it was used as the main source of water for the area in the past and a local clinic where wounded Vietnamese soldiers got treated during the Vietnam - France war. Historically and geologically, the cave is meaningful, so it deserves a visit.
- **Chieu Cave:** Chieu cave is at the height of 250 meters above sea level, with its tree-covered 15-meter wide mouth. It is another choice for those who love nature-made cracks. To reach here, from Mai Chau town, head southwest to a sign that reads “To Chieu cave”. As many as 1200 steps are what travelers have to conquer. It is certainly tiring, but it is worth it because those who say “made it” get a better view of the valley from a different perspective.
- **The Thai Museum:** It is a private collection of valuable old objects made by the White Thai: silver coins, earrings, necklaces, old looms, embroidered blankets, wooden and bamboo baskets, traps, jewelry cases, flint guns, lots of farming tools... The collector, a White Thai man, spent ten years, bringing them together. They are all now on display at the Culture House in Van village.

Festivals & Holidays: Filled with ethnic groups, Mai Chau is home to many fascinating festivals throughout the year such as:

- **Xen Muong Festival:** A White Thai festival held on the 10th day of the 1st month in the Lunar Calendar. This festival welcomes a bright future for Mai Chau, and pays respect to the people’s ancestors.
- **Xen Xo Phon Festival:** A White Thai festival held between the 1st and 28th day of the 4th Lunar Calendar month. This festival is held at the start of the dry season in Mai Chau, and is a plea for rain in the form of songs.
- **Cha Chieng Festival:** A White Thai festival held in Spring by a local shaman. The shaman is believed to have been blessed with the power to heal disease, and this festival is a celebration of thanks from the doctor and his people to the gods for said power.
- **Xec Bua Festival:** A Muong festival held during the Lunar New Year. A celebration of wishes! It is the custom during this festival to send wishes to one another in song, using a traditional gong as part of the music.

- **Long Tong Festival:** A Dzaio and Tay festival held from the 5th to the 15th of the first Lunar Calendar month. This festival is related to the traditional farming life of the local people, and takes place in the area's most prosperous rice field. Its purpose is to pray for good weather, abundant harvests and an affluent life.

Accommodation: Mai Chau offers a variety of accommodations, from budget-friendly homestays to boutique lodges and eco-resorts. Booking ahead is recommended, especially during the busy tourist seasons. You can stay in traditional stilt houses for an authentic experience or opt for modern lodges with stunning views of rice paddies and mountains.

Clothing:

- **Spring/Summer:** Pack lightweight clothing, like T-shirts, shorts, and comfortable walking shoes for exploring the countryside. Bring sunscreen, hats, and sunglasses to protect yourself from the sun, and insect repellent for outdoor activities.
- **Autumn/Winter:** Prepare for cooler temperatures by packing layers such as sweaters, long-sleeve shirts, and a light jacket. Sturdy shoes and a raincoat are recommended, as occasional rain showers can occur, especially in winter.

Transportation:

- **Walking:** if you enjoy walking, then a stroll around the surrounding villages for a couple of hours is the perfect way to see all the sights in the town and is an especially good choice for colder weather.
- **Bicycles & Motorbike:** Renting bicycles or motorbikes is a popular way to explore Mai Chau and its surroundings
- **Private car or taxi:** Hire cars or taxis are available for you to get around Mai Chau and its surrounding area.
- **Electric bus:** it will take you to most nearby villages which are the perfect option for days when it is raining

Local Drinks:

- **Vietnamese Coffee:** Particularly Vietnamese iced coffee (cà phê sữa đá) is very popular.
- **Mai Ha Wine:** Mai Ha wine is made from different types of leaves and tubers, such as wild raisins, ginger, parsley, grapefruit, spinach, etc and it is the soul of Mai Chau cuisine.
- **Phao leaves water:** A special drink in Mai Chau, made from a kind of forest leaves available. Leaves after being broken, dried and then cut small, after cooking the pomegranate juice is acid, has the smell of medicinal herbs.

Local Food:

- **Bamboo rice:** rice are stuffed in a bamboo tube that's been tightly sealed and then grilled over a charcoal brazier
- **Sticky rice:** The ethnic Thai people skillfully use natural materials to create vibrant dyes like gac fruit or beetroot for deep reds and oranges and pandan leaves for pale green. Sticky rice is probably Mai Chau's most eye-catching dish
- **Mountain snails:** snails are found seasonally by streams and forests in Mai Chau.

- **Mai Chau-style grilled pork:** Mai Chau-style grilled pork is made from Asian black pigs, marinated in a blend of local spices like salt, lemongrass, ginger, galangal, and the unique "mac khen" pepper. This combination gives the meat a juicy, slightly sweet flavor, while the thick skin crisps perfectly on the grill.
- **Grilled freshwater fish:** a perennial favorite at traditional Thai festivals.
- **Grilled free-range chicken:** Similar to grilled pork, grilled free-range mountain chicken is also seasoned with "mac khen" or forest pepper only found in Vietnam's northwest.
- **Stir-fried bee pupae with bamboo shoots:** Two specialties of Mai Chau are wild bees and sour bamboo shoots that can be cooked into an extremely delicious fried dish. This is a dish only available in the summer.

Daily Life Activities:

- **Walking or Trekking:** The roads in Mai Chau aren't too steep, so they're suitable for most tourists, including children and the elderly.
- **Cycling through rice fields:** Mai Chau is one of the best places to go cycling in Vietnam. In the valley you will find a beautiful landscape with rice fields surrounded by mountains and small local villages of ethnic minorities.
- **Learn about ethnic textiles:** Local shops in Mai Chau have looms out front where you can watch the locals weaving, or give it a try yourself.
- **Enjoy ethnic dance and music:** Watch a White Thai performance, who are skilled at using natural materials to craft instruments that create mesmerizing rhythms.
- **Watching a traditional entertainment show:** Lovely Thai ladies in traditional costumes will perform umbrella dances, fan dances, and ethnic songs. Tourists often participate in the collective performance, dance together, drink local wine, and bamboo dancing.

Sports & Water Sports (Weather Permitting):

- **Cycling:** Explore Mai Châu's lush valleys, rice fields, and picturesque villages through scenic bike routes, offering a peaceful and immersive experience.
- **Trekking & Hiking:** Mai Châu is perfect for trekking, with trails that pass through charming ethnic minority villages and terraced rice fields.
- **Climbing:** For the adventurous, try rock climbing in the surrounding limestone cliffs.
- **Kayaking:** Paddle along the calm waters of the Bản Lác River, surrounded by peaceful countryside views.
- **Bamboo Rafting:** Enjoy a more traditional and relaxing experience by rafting down the river on a bamboo raft.

Art Performances & Entertainment Shows:

- Traditional Thai Dance Performances:
- Xòe Dance
- Bamboo Pole Dance

Art exhibitions and museums:

- Mai Châu Ethnic Museum

- Pù Luông Nature Reserve Visitor Center

Ha Long:

Ha Long Bay, located in the northeastern region of Vietnam, is a UNESCO World Heritage Site and one of the country's most iconic natural wonders. Known for its emerald waters and thousands of limestone islands topped with rainforests, Ha Long Bay offers a magical landscape that draws visitors from around the world. The bay is steeped in both natural beauty and cultural significance, making it a must-see destination for nature lovers, adventure seekers, and those interested in Vietnamese history.

Beaches: Ha Long Bay is known for its serene beaches, offering perfect spots for relaxation, swimming, and water sports. Popular beaches include Ti Top Beach, Bai Chay Beach, and Soi Sim Beach. With calm, turquoise waters, these beaches are ideal for sunbathing and water activities like kayaking and snorkeling.

Attractions:

- **Sung Sot Cave (Surprise Cave):** One of the largest and most beautiful caves in Ha Long Bay, featuring impressive stalactites and stalagmites.
- **Ti Top Island:** Famous for its pristine beach and panoramic views of Ha Long Bay from the top of the island's peak.
- **Bai Tu Long Bay:** A quieter, less-visited part of the bay, offering a more tranquil experience with stunning landscapes.
- **Dau Go Cave:** An ancient grotto known for its rich history dating back to the Mongol invasions and its spectacular limestone formations.
- **Cua Van Floating Village:** A traditional fishing village where visitors can experience the local way of life, complete with floating houses and small fishing boats.
- **Cat Ba Island:** A larger island near Ha Long, known for its national park, hiking trails, and diverse wildlife.

Cruises & Water Activities: Exploring Ha Long Bay by cruise is one of the most popular activities. Many cruises offer overnight stays on the bay, allowing visitors to witness the stunning sunrise and sunset over the water. Water activities such as kayaking, swimming, and snorkeling are common, especially around the limestone karsts and secluded beaches.

Festivals & Holidays: Ha Long Bay hosts several local festivals, with the Ha Long Carnival being the most famous. Held annually in April or May, this vibrant festival celebrates the culture and heritage of Quang Ninh Province with parades, street performances, and fireworks. The Lunar New Year and Mid-Autumn Festival are also widely celebrated in the region with traditional activities and family gatherings.

Accommodation: Visitors to Ha Long Bay have a wide range of accommodation options, from budget hostels to luxury resorts. Staying on an overnight cruise is highly

recommended, as it offers a unique way to experience the bay. On-land accommodations in Bai Chay or Tuan Chau also provide convenient access to the bay and nearby attractions.

Clothing:

- **Summer (May to Sep):** Light and breathable clothing is ideal for the hot, humid climate. Swimwear is essential for beach days and water activities. Don't forget hats, sunglasses, and sunscreen to protect against the sun.
- **Winter (Nov to Mar):** The weather can be cooler from November to March, so it's a good idea to bring a light jacket or sweater. Warm layers are useful for evening boat cruises.

Transportation:

- **Private Transfers:** Private cars and taxis are common for traveling to and from Hanoi, which is about 3-4 hours away by road.
- **Shuttle Buses:** Many tours offer shuttle buses to Ha Long Bay from Hanoi, making it easy to reach the bay.
- **Cruise Ships:** The main way to explore Ha Long Bay itself is by cruise ship, with options ranging from day cruises to multi-day luxury cruises.
- **Electric Cars & Bikes:** Available for hire in some parts of Ha Long City, electric cars and bikes are eco-friendly ways to explore the area.

Local Drinks:

- **Vietnamese Coffee:** Savor a cup of strong Vietnamese coffee (cà phê sữa đá) while admiring the bay's breathtaking scenery.
- **Coconut Water:** Fresh coconut water is a refreshing drink, perfect for hot days.
- **Ha Long Beer:** A local beer popular in the region, enjoyed by many visitors.

Local Food:

- **Seafood:** Ha Long Bay is famous for its fresh seafood. Enjoy dishes like grilled squid, prawns, and oysters, often served in seaside restaurants.
- **Cha Muc (Squid Sausage):** A specialty of Ha Long, made from fresh squid and served with sticky rice or bánh cuốn (rice rolls).
- **Nem Cua Be (Crab Spring Rolls):** Crispy spring rolls filled with fresh crab meat, a local delicacy.
- **Sam (Horseshoe Crab):** A unique dish often served in local markets and restaurants.
- **Banh Gat Gu:** A soft rice roll that is a regional favorite, often served with a savory dipping sauce.

Daily Life Activities:

- **Fishing Villages:** Explore traditional floating villages like Vung Vieng and Cua Van to experience the daily life of local fishermen and their families.
- **Island Hopping:** Take a boat tour to discover the hidden gems of Ha Long Bay, including lesser-known islands and beaches.
- **Spa & Wellness:** Many high-end resorts and cruises offer spa services, perfect for unwinding after a day of exploring.
- **Photography:** Ha Long Bay is a photographer's paradise. Capture the iconic limestone pillars, emerald waters, and dramatic landscapes.
- **Explore a floating village:** Ha Long Bay is not just a UNESCO-listed site, it's also home to a number of fishing communities who have lived on the water for centuries. Take a boat tour around a floating village for a glimpse of this rare and beautiful way of life.

Shopping:

- **Markets & Night Markets:** Shop for local handicrafts, seafood products, and souvenirs at the Ha Long Night Market. You can find unique items like pearl jewelry and locally made art.
- **Pearl Farms:** Ha Long Bay is home to several pearl farms, where visitors can learn about the cultivation of pearls and purchase high-quality pearl products.

Adventure & Outdoor Activities:

- **Hiking:** Cat Ba National Park offers several hiking trails that take you through lush forests and up to breathtaking viewpoints.
- **Rock Climbing:** The limestone karsts of Ha Long Bay are ideal for rock climbing, offering both beginner and advanced routes.
- **Kayaking & Canoeing:** Explore the hidden caves and lagoons of Ha Long Bay by kayak, an immersive way to experience the natural beauty of the area.
- **Swimming & Snorkeling:** The clear waters around the islands are great for swimming and snorkeling, especially at Ti Top Beach and nearby coral reefs.

Cultural Performances & Entertainment:

- **Water Puppet Shows:** Experience traditional Vietnamese water puppetry, a unique art form that tells stories of rural life and legends, performed in local theaters.
- **Traditional Music & Dance:** Some cruises and hotels offer live performances of traditional Vietnamese music and dance during dinner, adding a cultural dimension to your stay in Ha Long Bay.